

EOA OR WEST

LONDON POEMS



HMS Press (est. 1982) acquired Atlantic Disk Publishers [ADP] (Atlanta Georgia) in 1994 and in 1995 created its own Imprint: Books On Disk [BOD]. HMS Press ceased its electronic book publishing in 1999. ADP ran out of Stamford Connecticut and BOD ran out of London Ontario. The National Library of Canada requires by law, one copy of any electronic book published for Legal Deposit. All ADP & BOD & EBIP electronic books are being converted from WordPerfect & Text ascii files to PDF files for this purpose. Electronic Books In Print [EBIP] are books produced with the assistance of the London Chapter of the Canadian Poetry Association [CPA] in paperback, chapbook or electronic format.

ALL RIGHTS ARE RETAINED BY THE AUTHOR AND NO PORTION OF THIS MATERIAL SHALL BE COPIED OR TRANSMITTED IN PART OR IN WHOLE VIA ANY MEANS INCLUDING PHOTOCOPIER OR THE INTERNET WITHOUT PERMISSION FROM THE PUBLISHER EXCEPT FOR SHORT PASSAGES USED IN REVIEWS. PERMISSION IS GIVEN FOR PRINTING FOR PERSONAL USE ONLY SHOULD THE READER DECIDE NOT TO READ THIS BOOK ON THE SCREEN, OR ELECTRONIC BOOK READER DEVICE.

Production of this ADP / BOD or EBIP book in PDF format does in no way, mean that the book is being published, reprinted or re-published as an HMS Press publication and is only being produced for Legal Deposit with the National Library of Canada and individual reading samples.

EOA or West

London Poems



**edited by Anna Fleet
project editor/publisher Wayne Ray**

**Canadian Poetry Association
London Chapter
&
Electronic Books In Print**

London Ontario

literarynewscpa@yahoo.ca

ISBN 1-55253-051-5

Cataloguing In Publication Data:

East of Adelaide, or West / [edited by] Wayne S. Ray

Includes index.

ISBN 1-55253-051-5

**1. London (Ont.)--Fiction. 2. Poetry, Canadian (English)
3. Canadian poetry (English) I. Ray, Wayne**

**PS8323.L59E28 2002 C813'01083271326 C2002-903585-6
PR9197.32.E28 2002**

London Poems

Due to an oversight in my eagerness to advertize to the Planet Earth via the Internet, seeking submissions for the two anthologies I was doing. I began by looking for poetry and short stories written by people who were from or had once lived or visited London and were written in London. As the submissions began arriving and I picked out the two themes, I began receiving poetry written specifically about London locations. I have incorporated the London poems into this anthology and the London stories and prose into the other anthology. I hope you enjoy these poems as much as *Tear The Rust Of Mt Heart Anthology*.

Wayne Ray
Publisher & Managing Editor

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Kathleen Haynes

Loud Night On St. Julien
My London Years
The 50s Life

Barry Butson

Claim
The Nice People of London

Richard Grove

Swallowed By The Dark
Never Known It Wetter

J. Alvin Speers

Duty Post Vet

Bill & Norma Clare

Slippery

James Deahl

London Poems:

 October Sunday at the Cove
 A Winter's Day

Tanglewood Orchard

Bea O'Donnell

Outside Queen Street Victorian Home
Grand Old Home Queen Street

Pat Austin

Victorian Library - Eldon House
Remembrance Day Plus Two (1994)

Barbara Phillips

Victoria Park
McManus Theatre

LOUD NIGHT ON ST. JULIEN

Kathleen Haynes

In the evening, laying in bed,
early, because I was only five,
I heard a rattle-banging on the wind
and I dreamed of what it could be.
maybe a giant, angry and cantankerous,
banging his tea mug on his table,
so that all his dishes rattled around
like a boisterous game of tiddley-winks,
or perhaps it was a gigantic skeleton
shaking its bones in a frantic dance
to escape the rag and bone man who
was coming down the street in his wagon,
or was it God moving His chairs
to welcome new guests to Heaven?
I didn't know it was the wooden talking bridge
at Egerton Street, announcing crossing cars.

MY LONDON YEARS

Kathleen Haynes

Eyes lit up, peeking like a small bird,
I saw jelly beans in jars
in the small store on Horton Street.
begging at two years old,
for this manna for the young, / six for a penny,
later two cent boodle bags of candy
at Buddie s Booth on Ham Road East
older, going downtown by bus, alone,
allowance clutched in change purse,
joining a crowd milling noisily outside
the Odeon, for Saturday movie club.
Roy Rogers, Hopalong Cassidy, Green Hornet
in cliff-hangers each week,
titillating us with suspense.
popcorn flying, with unison screams
of laughter punctuating cartoons.
roar, rumble and crash of roller-skating
at the London Arena on Bathurst Street,
a Saturday morning thrill strapping
roller skates on your shoes,
circling the huge wooden floor
in time to rhythmic music.
those owning boot roller-skates not in our class,
but nothing mattered as long as
you stayed upright.
Ealing School, white brick and solid,
smelling of old orange peels,
dispensing education despite our hijinx.
years I spent on St. Julian
were the best, the worst.
Ealing and the world not ready for a
spirited child who balked at discipline.

THE 50'S LIFE

Kathleen Haynes

girls, teenaged girls, ,and young women,
dressed in a flamboyant
assortment of coloured cottons,
ready for work.
walking through Victoria Park,
chatting companionably,
from the rooms or apartments they rent,
with roommates.
the punctually melodic bells of St. Paul s
ring eight-thirty and their strides
automatically quicken.

giggling girls, and solemn senior stenographers
head to where they'll congregate
and chat by the files.

some are homesick for the towns
of Southwestern Ontario
where they go home weekends.
it's Monday mornings call
to the polished desks and spotless halls
of London Life. I was barely seventeen
when I went there as a file clerk full time.
for us all, responsibility came early

THE NICE PEOPLE OF LONDON

Barry Butson

London is packed with nice people.

I wish the whole world was the same.

I like nice people,

but cannot stop taking advantage.

Nice people almost demand ill treatment
because, if they had a clue about things,
they would not be nice.

Things - you know, how a man bends
over a woman, how thieves gather
early in the darkest morning, how
our minds perpetrate murder inside cars
behind smoked safety glass.

Nice people have no tolerance either,
for they have only gone two inches
along the yardstick of morality.
Those who've gone three or more
they condemn.
But if the inches are there,
why not take 'em?

Nice people would never whack
anyone's bare ass with a stick.
But maybe a lot of us need
and want
a really good whacking

and who's gonna apply it?
Certainly not them.

CLAIM

Barry Butson

Driving my daughter and her son to the doctor's,
I pass downtown locales where - as a young man -
I caroused. Towards them I feel fondly.
No matter that now I am mere stuffed grizzly;
I had my days
as a scholar and scamp,
seasons of raccoon and adder.

These buildings are proof,
these students arriving in town
for a new year of pranks
are just me & you again.

Memory is a greedy claimant.

SWALLOWED BY THE DARK

Richard Grove

As young lads we would on occasion
get caught out after dark
with adventures luring me and brother Peter
further past Erwin's farm than normal.

The night would swallow
the narrow worn lane
leading up to our grey stone house.
With a gulp it would devour the trees
that lined its edge
and gobbled us into fear.

The fence line in the distance
at the top of the field
was the first to disappear
as we galloped homeward
through growing mist
rolled over the tall fields of corn.

A silver corona of moonlight
would slowly appear
around tall tufts of grass
that could hardly be seen
as night emerged.

The new damp darkness devoured
everything except what was a brave
heart beat away.

NEVER KNOWN IT WETTER

Richard Grove

When I was just a young lad
we had a rainy spring.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

Galoshes to the mail box at the end of the lane.
Galoshes to school every day for weeks.
Galoshes even into town on post office days.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

The sun only showed its face
when we weren t lookin
I suspect between rain drops or at night
when we were sleepin
though judgin by the incessant drip, drip
in the attic into a tin pan it even rained then.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

It seemed like it rained week after week after week
My play cloths were wet.
My school clothes were wet.
Even my Sunday go to church cloths got wet
and I got in trouble.

The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

The one or two days it didn t rain that spring,
a silver mist hung in the air all day
so as you could feel it
wet on your face as you walked.
The farmers all said
they d never known it wetter
and by gosh it was wet that spring.

By summer it finally stopped rainin
but then the humidity set in.
The farmers all said

it was the most humid it had ever been
and by gosh it was humid that summer.

DUTY POST VET

J. Alvin Speers

I remember London
in nineteen-fifty two
At New Westminster DVA Hospital
I was an airman passing through.

Sent down from Air Force Base Clinton
When a bronchial pneumonia bout
Exposed my deviated septum.
Operation would straighten it out.

The happiest fellow in the ward
Was a double amputee;
Veteran of the Second World War,
A hero indeed was he!

Rain or shine, each day was fine
In his optimistic point of view.
His routine never altered
And he was never blue.

His body ended at his hips,
But man, his arms were strong.
Bright and early every morning
He moved himself along.

Heaving self from bed on waking
Into wheel chair sitting near,
Off to washroom for ablutions,
Grinning, whistling with good cheer.

After breakfast, all decked out
With regimental tam on head,
Brass insignia carefully shined
On said head dress, which was red.

Then he wheeled himself to post
Near main entrance double doorway
To wait and greet each one who entered,
Wishing them a happy day.

He had served his king and country,
Lost both legs in battle fray,
Yet maintained most healthy outlook
Uplifting all met along the way.

Each time I think of London town
I recall the cheerful vet
Who was unforgettable inspiration,
Second to none that I have met.

"SLIPPERY"

Bill & Norma Clare

In Storybook Gardens in London's fair city
Lived a young sea lion whose nick-name was 'Slippery'.

Around his pool he zoomed and cavorted;
Flipping and flapping, he flopped and he snorted.

He thrived on attention; he liked to perform,
Then gracefully bowed for each grand encore!

Now Slippery was truly nobody's fool,
And one night he leapt right out of his pool.

He waddled on down to the old River Thames,
Then swam fast and furious around every bend.

He played under bridges, stopping often to rest,
Where he was heading was anyone's guess!

To the mouth of the Thames, then in Lake St. Clair
He dodged the huge lake freighters here and there.

Down the Detroit River and into Lake Erie
To the Ohio rivers he quickly did flee.

When folks tried to catch him the big chase was on,
And in these deep waters, a new star was born!

He outwitted them all, then came up to peek, Why,
Slippery was now playing hide-and-go-seek!

With hooks and with nets the crowds did pursue,
While one sheriff hurled out his great big lasso!
This sea lion pup of international fame
Discovered that this was a great fun-filled game!

Slippery ducked under waves, then sped far away,
Keeping his would-be owners at bay.

At night he hid in the dark shoreline reeds,
Giggling and whispering, "You'll never catch me!"
But one day in a boathouse, he fell sound asleep,
And succumbed to his captors without e'en a peep!

He was packed in a crate, this infamous clown,
Down the highway his motorcade headed for home.

In cities and villages folks cheered him on,

As "The Slippery Procession" moved slowly along.

With welcoming signs and a momentous parade
London welcomed him home one bright summer day!

There in his pool, he put on his old act,
For this marathon swimmer was thrilled to be back!

He flipped through his shows and flopped down his slide,
As a chorus of cheering arose nation-wide!

LONDON POEMS:

James Deahl

OCTOBER SUNDAY AT THE COVE

I

Maple and oak stain the water red;
I watch their colour shift
around the still surfaces of stones
where a dry creek enters the cove.

II

All afternoon things happen around me:
small animals I can never see
root in fallen leaves; fish leap
from their dark homes below.

III

I do nothing but sit quietly
while hidden lives rise
and fall about me. The heron
has yet to follow the kingfishers south.

IV

We must meet hidden travellers
wherever we journey. The cove is dead calm.
From within God's blue silence
an osprey's piercing call.

A WINTER'S DAY

I

Ice crystals ghost across
sheets of frozen water.
Snow fills the little baskets
of Queen Anne's Lace
with blue silence.

Darkness resides
among bare branches.
The familiar birds
stay in the brush, remain
deep in their animal solitude.

Everywhere sons wait
for the cup to pass.
The fathers have grown old,
they silently gather at the river
of grief, at the river of hope.

II

Winter bulls stamp sullenly
within the lee of stone barns.
Frozen drifts sweep like
a white sea across road
and pasture.

I boil water for tea,
look into the west
as if expecting deliverance.
I wait for snow to melt,
for rivers to freshen.

Downstream, chains of great cities
loom out of farmland.
Men in black stand
at the gates of empire
like convicts awaiting darkness.

III

Our sun flames down wrapped
by winter colours;
darkness gathers along
a frozen river
as the evening star comes.

Beneath its skin of ice
the Thames flows to Lake St. Clair
where another, deeper river
carries the cold of the North
faithfully, without regret.

There can be no salvation
through deeds alone.
The creek lies buried
when winter purifies
the ravine with white hands.

TANGLEWOOD ORCHARD

James Deahl

After weeks of dry weather
snow builds its white house
in the summer bower.

II

Far to the west, quicksilver clouds
blot out our distant sun;
the last leaves rattle their bare trees.

III

Cardinal and blue jay
decorate scrub and hedgerow
the only colour to touch the woods this season.

IV

I cast out crusts for birds and rodents.
Dark smoke rises into the sunset;
I open the door to the winter.

V

All night going home
the wind carries bits of light
into morning's bright hive.

OUTSIDE QUEEN STREET VICTORIAN HOME

Bea O'Donnell

Porch face of the old Victorian home
Is scored like lady's cake or gingerbread.
Veil's diadem carved into her forehead
Now, cutting tool's rusting on the front lawn.
Curtains over front, twelve-paned windows drawn
Skirts pulled up close, held out of the laneway.

Side turrets gripped close, like sceptres in fists
Hollow silos hold buffets and linen.
Where bone china and laces were shown in
Before unpaid staff's towel was thrown in
Frail bird cage of spindled front verandah
Which fashionable finches'd once flown in.

Top front facade now decapitated
So primped; lady-like, wooden tendrils grace
Trifoil gables' windows round, powdered face
Sad, bonneted by its segmented ruffle.
At the back a grey cinderblock bustle,
Laneway medallions glint off intruders.

GRAND OLD HOME QUEEN STREET

Bea O'Donnell

Home's phials kept topped up with prestige
Ball finial cap turret flask pairs
Pendules like princess's ornaments.
Newel urns crowning the stairs.

An institution since 1850
Innermost rooms, no windows to outside
Interior control, stronger than the seasons
Treading years on years of carpet runs.

Coronna circling round windows.
Each smooth brick king pin shaped .
And dentelle line of demarcation
Tailored, cinched tight between upstairs
And less private ground floor of common man's station

Airs exhaled through upper eaves' soffit
Front wrought iron edged, not
A promenade verandah
Quoin-patched elbows keep close neighbours at bay
Low buildings on grounds watch up in awe.

VICTORIAN LIBRARY - ELDON HOUSE

Pat Austin

past parasol and canes in an elephant leg
off darkened hall
the room itself
where the curious look from a distance
at pictures of ancient Rome,
seashell gleam of china,
and dusty books stacked thick

no one can inspect
the blackcold fireplace
 framed by old Dutch tiles,
sit on fragile chairs
or write with quill at spindly desk;
the rope curves firmly against intruders
 from the present
- this room is waiting for phantoms
 from the past

REMBRANCE DAY PLUS TWO (1994)

Pat Austin

Sunday . . .

Centennial Hall

Gilbert and Sullivan music is a pleasant presentation though I keep thinking of the ceremony Friday for all those dead . . .

Intermission . . .

(in Victoria Park)

but where did all the poppies go?
last leaves flutter in a kind of mist
green statue soldier
stands astride, looks west.

A few walkers scurry past
not looking up . . .

suddenly, a friend who came from the Isles
 some years ago,
hurries out the other door
 restrains tears
 stands and gazes across the street

VICTORIA PARK

Barbara Phillips

lights raise diaphanous garlands
on trees evening sentinels on guard
in winter darkness smooth as velvet
over the rink moon cool light follows
skaters some are lovers holding hands
on the smoothest journey
they will ever take together
getting in the way are children
they sprawl in all directions
as feet in new skates reject balance
laughter and shrieks bounce off snowbanks
later mists settle among forgotten mittens
snow rich cocoons pillow dreams
somewhere near Victoria smiles

MCMANUS THEATRE

Barbara Phillips

children squirm in line
when will they let us in
why are we standing here
ushers keep order at the doors
washrooms are well attended
under the Grand a hush of excitement
bounces off echo lit walls
when it's time a scramble for seats
snowsuits get tangled in scarves
as the lights dim faces are tuned
to the stage someone tumbles into an aisle
there is a swift reprimand in off stage
whispers actors
dressed in primary colours
project unworldly voices to tell
the story young eyes stare
small hands point
what's he doing mom
what did he say
questions fall like polka dots
parents' answers become torn umbrellas

Anna Anna Fleet also shares a passion for London, Ontario, as it was her home for four years while also shares a passion for her BA degree in honors English at the University of Western Ontario for her BA degree in honors English at the ddegree degree in Journalism/New Media from Sheridan College in Oakville. Anna currently resides in Cambridge, Ontario where she is the Associate Editor for *Florida Travel Magazine*. In the past she . In the past she was a Researcher/Reporter at *TV Guide* and she has also been a Researcher/Reporter at *Homemakers*, *Homemakers* web site.

Wayne Wayne Ray moved from Toronto to London in 1988 and Wayne Ray moved from Toronto to London in 1988 and runs their web sites and Resource Center Council, past President of the London New Arts Festival and is President of HMS Press (Electronic Books in Print).

**The Canadian Poetry Association: London Chapter
wishes to thank the City of London
and the London Arts Council
for their contributions
and support for this project.**

